AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) A method of preventing evolution to chronic infection of a challenge HCV infection in a mammal comprising administering an effective amount of a prophylactic HCV composition prior to said challenge HCV infection, said composition comprising a prophylactically effective amount of at least one HCV envelope E1 protein or a part thereof; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle wherein said HCV envelope E1 protein or part thereof is a single or specific oligomeric protein not disulfide linked with contaminants.

Claim 30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) A method of preventing evolution to chronic infection of a challenge HCV infection in a mammal comprising administering an effective amount of a prophylactic HCV composition prior to said challenge HCV infection, said composition comprising a prophylactically effective amount of a combination of at least two HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof wherein said at least two E1 proteins or parts thereof are single or specific oligomeric proteins not disulfide linked with contaminants and are derived from different HCV genotypes, subtypes or isolates; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

Claim 32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 31 or claim 29 wherein said challenge HCV infection is an infection with a HCV of a genotype or subtype homologous or heterologous to the HCV genotype or subtype, or HCV genotypes or subtypes, from which the E1 protein or part thereof comprised in said composition are derived.

Claim 34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29 wherein said mammal is a human.

36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31 wherein said mammal is a human.

Claims 37-39. (Canceled)

40. (Previously Presented) The method according to claims 29 or 31 wherein said E1 protein is E1s.

41. (Previously Presented) The method according to claims 29 or 31 wherein said E1 protein or part thereof is produced by a recombinant host.

42. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 41 wherein said recombinant host is a recombinant mammalian cell, a recombinant yeast cell or a recombinant virus.

43. (Previously Presented) The method according to claims 29 or 31 wherein the cysteines of said HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof are blocked.

44. (Previously Presented) The method according to claims 29 or 31 wherein said HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof are in the form of particles.

45. (Previously Presented) A method of preventing evolution to chronic infection of a challenge HCV infection in a mammal comprising administering an effective amount of a prophylactic HCV composition prior to said challenge HCV infection, said composition consisting of a prophylactically effective amount of at least one HCV envelope E1 protein or a part thereof; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle wherein said HCV envelope E1 protein or part thereof is a single or specific oligomeric protein not disulfide linked with contaminants.

46. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 45 wherein said mammal is a human.

47. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 45 wherein said E1 protein is E1s.

48. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 45 wherein said E1 protein or part thereof is produced by a recombinant host.

49. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 48 wherein said recombinant host is a recombinant mammalian cell, a recombinant yeast cell or a recombinant virus.

50. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 45 wherein the cysteines of said HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof are blocked.

51. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 45 wherein said HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof are in the form of particles.